

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims**

Claims 1-17 (Cancelled).

18. (New) A control circuit, processor and half-bridge combination for use in operating electric motors,  
said half-bridge including a first electronic switch lying between a supply voltage and a phase tap, and a second electronic switch lying between the phase tap and ground,  
said control circuit being adapted to control the first and second electronic switches with one out of only three switching signal pairings,  
said signal pairings comprising (i) said first switch being on and said second switch being off, (ii) said first switch being off and said second switch being on, and (iii) said first and second switches being off, and  
said processor having a signal output port coupled to control said control circuit to select one of said three signal pairings, via one of three possible output signals at said signal output port.
19. (New) A combination according to claim 18, wherein the processor is adapted to generate at said signal output port either a "high" signal state, a "low" signal state, or a "tristate" signal state with a floating potential between said high and low signal states.
20. (New) A combination according to claim 19, wherein the signal output port of the processor connected to the control circuit is either at a feed voltage of the control circuit or at ground, or allows free potential setting.

21. (New) A combination according to claim 18, wherein for defining the only three switching signal pairings, the control circuit comprises a stage that is not freely programmable.
22. (New) A combination according to claim 21, wherein said stage has hard-wired components.
23. (New) A combination according to claim 21, wherein said stage establishes fixed associations between the switching signal pairings and switching states at the signal output port.
24. (New) A combination according to claim 23, wherein said stage has hard-wired components.
25. (New) A combination according to claim 18, wherein the control circuit has two complementary stages which are controllable via the signal output port.
26. (New) A combination according to claim 25, wherein inputs of the complementary stages are connected to the signal output port via like-valued resistors.
27. (New) A combination according to claim 18, wherein the control circuit includes a driver circuit for each of the electronic switches.
28. (New) A combination according to claim 18, wherein in the event a feed voltage at the processor breaks down, the control circuit produces the switching signal pairing in which the first switch is switched off and the second switch is switched on.

29. (New) A combination according to claim 18, wherein when a "tristate" signal state is present at the signal output port of the processor, the first and second switches are switched off.
30. (New) A combination according to claim 29, wherein if the "tristate" signal state is present at the signal output port of the processor, the potential at said output port will float between "high" and "low" signal states.
31. (New) A combination according to claim 18, wherein:
  - the control circuit includes a driver circuit for each of the electronic switches, and
  - the driver circuit for the second electronic switch is capable of automatically switching the second electronic switch into a freewheeling state in response to the inductance of a load coupled to the switch and the switching off of the first electronic switch.
32. (New) A control device for a load fed via phase taps of at least two half-bridges, each of the half-bridges being controllable with a control of its own,
  - each control comprising:
    - a first electronic switch, lying between a supply voltage and a phase tap,
    - a second electronic switch, lying between the phase tap and ground, and
    - a control circuit, which controls said first and second electronic switches of the half-bridge, with one out of only three switching signal pairings for the two electronic switches,
  - said signal pairings comprising (i) said first switch being on and said second switch being off, (ii) said first switch being off and said second switch being on, and (iii) said first and second switches being off, and
  - said control device comprising:

a processor having a common signal output port coupled to control said controls via the respective control circuit of each control to select one of said three switching signal pairings, via one of three possible output signals at said common signal output port.

33. (New) A control device according to claim 32, wherein the half-bridges are controllable in their power by pulse-width modulation operation of at least one of the electronic switches of the half-bridges respectively to be switched on.
34. (New) A control device according to claim 33, wherein during said pulse-width modulation operation, the first electronic switch of one of the half-bridges can be operated using pulse-width modulation and a corresponding second electronic switch of another half-bridge is constantly turned on.